

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7123

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5127

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, IR, US

SUBJ: MAAG REQUIREMENT STUDY

REF: (A) STATE 119079 (DTG 141703Z MAY 76), (B) 75 TEHRAN  
11995 (DTG 110730 DEC 75) (NOTAL)

1. ELIMINATION OR SHARP REDUCTION IN SIZE OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE ELEMENTS IN IRAN WOULD EFFECTIVELY NULLIFY PRESENT IRANIAN PLANS FOR MILITARY MODERNIZATION, SERIOUSLY DAMAGE U.S. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND CRITICALLY WEAKEN U.S. STRATEGIC POSITION IN THIS REGION. IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE A MORE HARMFUL ACTION THAT U.S. COULD TAKE AGAINST IRAN OR AGAINST OUR OWN OVERALL INTERESTS HERE. URGE THAT HIGHEST PRIORITY BE ASSIGNED TO RETENTION OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE GROUP IN IRAN AT CURRENT MANNING LEVELS.

2. AS WE SEE IT, THERE ARE THREE POWERFUL FACTORS IN SUPPORT OF THIS RECOMMENDATION:

A. U.S. MILITARY TIES TO IRAN HAVE LONGER AND MORE STABLE HISTORY THAN IS CASE WITH MOST OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING MOST NATO MEMBERS. SINCE WORLD WAR II U.S. HAS  
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PROVIDED MOST OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL ADVICE FOR IRANIAN

ARMED SERVICES. OUR PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN EXCELLENT AND, IN CONSEQUENCE, WE ARE TRUSTED AS IS NO OTHER COUNTRY WITH A MILITARY LINK TO IRAN. OVER PAST THREE DECADES, OUR BEHAVIOR AND EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN, RATHER THAN ANY FORMAL AGREEMENTS OR ASSURANCES OF OUR LEADERS, HAVE CREATED A COMMITMENT THAT IS HEAVILY RELIED UPON IN THIS COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH IRANIANS MAY NOT NOW EXPECT US TO EXERCISE KIND OF INFLUENCE WE USED WITH USSR DURING AZERBAIJAN CRISIS, THEY DO EXPECT US TO CONTINUE TO HELP THEM HELP THEMSELVES TO DEFEND THEIR OWN AND WESTERN INTERESTS IN THIS REGION. THEY DO NOT EXPECT FROM US SHODDY TREATMENT SOVIETS HAVE GIVEN THEIR FRIENDS SUCH AS EGYPT AND INDONESIA.

B. MORE THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY OF COMPARABLE SIZE OR IMPORTANCE, IRANIAN SOVEREIGN IS DE FACTO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF HIS NATION'S ARMED SERVICES. THE SHAH PERSONALLY MAKES DECISIONS ON MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS PROCUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF HIS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. HE RELIES HEAVILY ON U.S. ADVICE AND CONTINUED GOOD PERFORMANCE. WERE WE TO BACK OFF IN SIGNIFICANT WAY FROM SHAH'S LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS, WE COULD EXPECT HIS REACTION TO BE PERSONAL AND FORCEFUL.

C. DURING PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE SIGNED MORE ORDERS FOR MILITARY GOODS AND SERVICES WITH IRAN THAN WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY. ONLY ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF ORDERED EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO DATE, AND NEXT FEW YEARS WILL SEE ARRIVAL OF BULK OF HARDWARE AND RIGOROUS TESTING OF IRANIAN ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY. IMPLIED IN OUR WILLINGNESS TO SELL THIS EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN UNDERSTANDING THAT WE WOULD STAND BEHIND IT WITH TRAINING, LOGISTICS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT. INCLUDED ON IRANIAN ORDER LIST ARE SOME OF OUR MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS SUCH AS F-14, SPRUANCE SHIPS, AND I-HAWK. PUTTING THESE SYSTEMS TO EFFECTIVE USE IN IRANIAN ARMED FORCES, WHICH HAVE LIMITED MANAGERIAL AND TECHNICALLY SKILLED PERSONNEL, WILL SEVERELY STRAIN IRANIAN CAPABILITIES. IN FACT, IT IS CLEAR THAT WITHOUT OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE, EFFECTIVE USE CANNOT BE MADE OF MOST COMPLEX WEAPONS SYSTEMS. ALTHOUGH HEAVY RELIANCE IS PLACED ON SERVICES OF CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL, ROLE OF OFFICIAL U.S. DOD PERSONNEL IS CRUCIAL

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IN PROVIDING OVERALL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE TO GOI. IN IRANIAN AIR FORCE, LOGISTICS SYSTEM IS INTEGRATED WITH USAF SUPPLY SOURCES. SIMILAR SUPPLY LINKAGES EXIST WITH IIGF HELICOPTERS AND NEW NAVAL SYSTEM. TERMINATION OF U.S. MILITARY ROLE WOULD REDUCE IRANIAN LOGISTICS NETWORKS TO CHAOS.

3. SHOULD WE NOT BE ABLE TO AVOID CONGRESSIONAL LIMITA-

TIONS ON OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IN IRAN AS OUTLINED IN  
CURRENT LEGISLATION, WE FORESEE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE  
CONSEQUENCES:

A. CANCELLATION OF NUMBER OF MAJOR MILITARY WEAPONS  
SYSTEMS PROCUREMENT ACTIONS WITH U.S. AND PROBABLE REFUSAL  
OF GOI TO SETTLE ON OUR TERMS.

B. SHARP REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION OF ORDERS FROM U.S. FIRMS  
IN CIVILIAN SECTOR.

C. POLITICAL/ECONOMIC ACTIONS AGAINST USG INTZMSTS,  
INCLUDING CONCEIVABLE ASSOCIATION WITH ANY FUTURE ARAB  
OIL EMBARGO, LESS COOPERATIVE POSTURE ON REGIONAL, U.N.  
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL MATTERS, AND COMPLETE LOSS OF  
LEVERAGE OVER IRANIAN TRANSFERS OF WEAPONS TO THIRD  
COUNTRIES.

D. GROWTH OF SELFISHLY MOTIVATED CIVILIAN DEFENSE  
CONTRACTOR INFLUENCE IN IRAN WITHOUT COUNTERVAILING USG  
VOICE. AS GOI WOULD BE SUBJECT OF HEAVY CONTRACTOR  
PRESSURES, ABSENCE OF ANY MEANINGFUL MILITARY PRESENCE HERE WOULD  
REQUIRE THAT WE RESPOND TO IRANIAN REQUESTS OR INITIATIVES  
WITH LEGISLATION OR OTHER EQUALLY BLUNT INSTRUMENTS,  
E.G., DENIAL OF CERTAIN SALES, RATHER THAN PERSUASION.

E. LOSS OF SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION AND  
OTHER STRATEGICALLY VALUABLE RIGHTS IN IRAN, NOT EXCLUDING  
OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS. TURK REACTION TO U.S. ARMS RESTRIC-  
TIONS HAS PROVIDED A LESSON FOR IRAN.

F. REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT REGION IF U.S. WERE TO  
TREAT WITH SO LITTLE CONSIDERATION A FAITHFUL ALLY WHICH  
HAS, IN FACT, TAKEN NO ACTION AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS (UNLESS ONE  
WANTS TO MENTION OIL PRICES) NOR IN ANY WAY WORKED AGAINST U.S.  
POLICY. NO COUNTRY IN THIS REGION COULD FEEL SECURE IN ITS  
RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. SOVIET INFLUENCE, NOW AT RELATIVELY LOW-EBB,  
WOULD GROW APACE.

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4. IN SUMMARY, OUR INABILITY TO OVERCOME CONGRESSIONAL  
STRICTURES ON MILITARY PRESENCE IN IRAN WOULD BE  
DISASTROUS.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT MANNING LEVELS SHOULD BE CONTINUED AT  
ROUGHLY CURRENT LEVEL. PRESENTLY WE HAVE 209 U.S.  
POSITIONS ASSIGNED TO MAAG, 728 TECHNICIANS UNDER TAFT  
CONTRACT, 438 SUPPORT PERSONNEL (INCLUDING TAFT COMPONENT)  
AND 128 OTHER SECURITY ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL. TOTAL OF  
1,500 PERSONNEL SHOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR NEXT 2-3 YEARS.  
THERE WILL BE FLUCTUATIONS UP AND DOWN AS SOME TECHNICIANS  
FINISH THEIR WORK ON PROJECTS AND OTHERS BEGIN NEW TASKS.  
ALL BUT 8 MAAG SPACES AND 70-80 PERCENT OF OTHER ELEMENTS  
WILL BE FUNDED BY GOI IN FY 77, A SMALL INCREASE IN GOI  
SUPPORT OVER FY 76 FINANCING. AS OUR MILITARY PRESENTLY IS

ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO HISTORICAL RATHER THAN RATIONAL PRINCIPLES, SOME REORGANIZATION WITHIN NUMBERS ALLOTTED IS PLANNED IN NEAR FUTURE.

6. THERE ARE NO RPT NO SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVES TO PRESENT DOD MANNING LEVELS IN IRAN. WE SEE NO POINT IN ERECTING ALTERNATIVE STRAW MEN (E.G., CONTRACTOR OR THIRD COUNTRY SUBSTITUTION) ONLY TO KNOCK THEM DOWN. TO EXTENT THAT DOD NUMBERS ARE CUT BACK, WE WOULD SUFFER SOME OF EFFECTS LISTED IN PARA 3 ABOVE.

7. DEFREP, CHIEF, ARMIS/MAAG, AND I HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO RESTRICT NUMBER OF PERSONNEL TO LOWEST LEVEL PRACTICAL. THESE EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE AND ARE FAR PREFERABLE IN TERMS OF USG INTEREST, WE BELIEVE, THAN IMPOSITION BY WASHINGTON OF RADICAL CUTS OR ARBITRARY CEILINGS.

8. U.S. DEFREP AND CHIEF, ARMIS/MAAG CONCUR. SEE ALSO REF (B) FOR ADDITIONAL POINTS.  
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